

Building Neighborhood Capacity

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Community Affairs

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Building Neighborhood Capacity Isn't Really Like Hunting Unicorn, So Why Does It Feel That Way?

- Why does it seem harder now to grow membership?
 - Competing interests: economic recession → time constraints → low turn-outs!
 - Unholy union = welfare reform + tenure transition + disinvestment (increased blight and crime) = fewer stakeholders with *skin the game*.

Ok, So Now What?

- You now know the two things that hold us back.
- Address those two things, add in some new “Best Practices,” and voila: Increased Capacity!!!




.....because you have to increase membership in order to increase capacity, right?
I mean, right?

Happily Ever After!



Goodnight everybody and thank you for having me!

Oh man, I thought you were gonna be different, Tk!

- Those Two problems: lack of free time and lack of ownership.
 - Create new – *and old*- ways to connect with neighbors around their busy schedules.
 - Don't break your leader! Give every last person in your association a “job”
 - Work on tiny projects, but leverage huge partners.
 - Let us break-it-down, using a case from your audience...

My “Normal” Neighbors

- Heart of UD. Where the “home team” lives.
- ~1,800 households. 37% owner-occupied.
- Normal Station Neighborhood Association, circa about 1970 or so, with paid membership fluctuating between 15 and 30. About 12 longterm, committed neighbors serve as the core for this group, but they divide labor like professionals.

NSNA

- Old Ways = Tried & True
 - NSNA has published a newsletter for over two decades, hand delivered by volunteers to every household. Costs less than \$250 quarterly.
 - NSNA maintains an active email list and reach 99% of their membership in this way.
 - NSNA has a functional block captain system, where most all parts of the map are covered by leadership. For NSNA, the ratio is about 1 captain for every three city blocks, both sides of streets.
 - NSNA has a leadership structure that leverages the professional expertise of residents and doesn't overburden the president. (*Normally*)

NSNA

- New Ways:

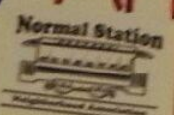
- NSNA has an active and closed facebook page with **395** members to date.
- NSNA leverages partnerships. Shared identity with larger geographies, nonprofits and institutional anchors. Uses these partnerships to influence policy and deliver services.
- NSNA uses data to drive decision making on everything from problem property abatement to crime reduction to redevelopment. *Pro-active!*

*And with the merger of the New Ways with the Tried & True ways, NSNA is a **Best Practitioner of Community Development** in Memphis*

How Things *Normally* Work: Back to School!

- $2/3$ = rental housing stock for university students.
 - Problem: Anti-social behavior and ignorance of housing code.
 - Solution: Udistrict Neighborhood Syllabus & Welcome Home, Tigers campaign.

11 PM - 7 AM
is
QUIET TIME




Good Tigers watch for children
Lots of kids live
Here - Your neighbors
@ St. Ann's + Canine School

Join the Normal Station
Neighborhood Association
by contacting Ken
Armstrong at
karmstrn@bellsouth.net

Normal Station



Neighborhood Association



<https://www.facebook.com/udistrict.memphis>

UDistrictMemphis.com

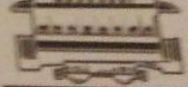
Your UDISTRICT NEIGHBORHOOD SYLLABUS:

<http://facebook.com/udistrict.memphis>

↓ download it! This will
be on the test!

Join the Normal Station
Neighborhood Association
by contacting Ken
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karmstrn@bellsouth.net

Normal Station



<https://www.facebook.com/udistrict.memphis>

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Welcome
Home,
Tigers!

Normal Station



Neighborhood Association



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Your UDISTRICT
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SYLLABUS:

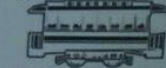
[http://facebook.com/
Udistrict.memphis](http://facebook.com/Udistrict.memphis)

*Your Study Guide
for living in the UD!*

Welcome 
Home, Tigers!

<https://www.facebook.com/udistrict.memphis>

Normal Station



Neighborhood Association



UDistrictMemphis.com

Great
TIGERS use
TURN
SIGNALS!

Normal Station



Neighborhood Association



<https://www.facebook.com/udistrict.memphis>

UDistrictMemphis.com

UD FACT:

Fewer "degrees of separation" in the UD (where everybody knows everybody)!

Means someone here probably knows your parents, and almost everyone here could find them if they needed to!

UD FACT:

* Garbage collection day is Tuesday!

-Please roll your can back up as soon as possible after pick-up! Welcome Home, Tigers!

UD FACT:

* All UD residents and their guests are required to use the restroom indoors, in restrooms designed for this purpose.

-RELATED FACT: We're still shocked every time this needs to be clarified.

UD FACT:

UD RESIDENTS LOVE TO PARTY!!!

However:

- CITYWIDE NOISE CURFEW is 11PM - 7AM

* Regardless of the hour, if we can hear YOUR PARTY from INSIDE our homes, it's a "NUISANCE" by law and you will receive a visit from law enforcement.

- 1 visit is a warning

- 2 visits is at least a ticket

- 3 visits and somebody's probably not going to make class that next Monday.

UD FACT:

Your neighborhood association participates in the Memphis Police Department Neighborhood Watch.

- We Watch. We call.

845-2677 MPD NON-EMERGENCIES (to report suspicious activities but no active crime)

9-1-1 EMERGENCIES

3-1-1 City Service Needs

UD FACT:

* 18,000 residents in 6,000 households in 7 neighborhoods, and everybody needs to cross the tracks at once.

-GOOD TIGERS USE TURN SIGNALS!

UD FACT:

* Most of us live here because we LOVE STUDENTS and we do something for a living that supports what you're doing!

UD FACT:

According to the US CENSUS American Community Survey, you now live in the smartest part of the city.

Standing with Our Normal Neighbors

- Normal Neighbors = ~5,000
- University of Memphis = ~20,000
- University Neighborhoods Development Corp.
- University District, Inc.
- Hyland Area Renewal Corp.
- University District Police Joint Agency
 - MPD, Campus Police, Code, Fire, Health, Community Affairs and both mayors' offices.

**HONOR
the
OVERLAY**

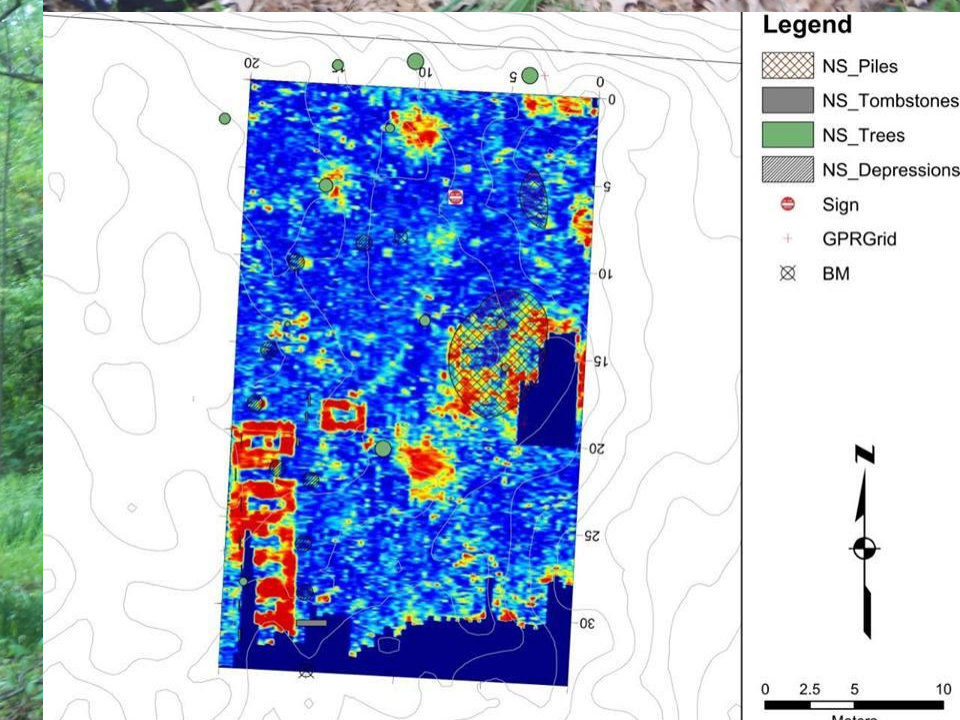




NORMAL STATION NEIGHBORHOOD

Named for a teacher's college and railroad depot, the Normal Station neighborhood is bounded by Goodlett, Park, Highland, and Southern. The Chickasaws originally had a hunting camp on Black Bayou that runs through the area. William F. Eckles bought much of the land in 1835, but all that remains of that time into the 21st Century are the Eckles family cemetery on Carnes Avenue and a former carriage house built in 1846. Two major influences on the neighborhood have been the Normal Depot, serving as a rail and streetcar stop until 1949, and the University of Memphis. The City annexed the neighborhood in 1929. Most houses, representing typical Southern styles, were built between the mid-1920s and early 1950s, and many eastern section homes were built in the 1940s for employees of the nearby Kennedy General Hospital for veterans. Normal Station neighborhood was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2005.

PLACED BY NORMAL STATION NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION
AND SHELBY COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION
2014



Back that thing on up a second!

- *Membership of how many did all that?*
 - *Answer: Leveraging Partnerships & Dividing Labor!*

Building Capacity isn't just another term for increasing membership, which is undermined by the things we talked about first. Being 'at capacity' in our context means that all the civic needs of your community are being met.



Question: How many engaged citizens is 'enough'?

Answer: Every last one of 'em, but we can work with considerably less!

Normalize Your Neighborhood

- Inventory everything. Housing condition, social capital, identify unmet needs/ service gaps.
 - Asset Mapping
 - SWOT Analysis
 - Community Surveys
- Create ‘jobs’ list so every person you snare can have one!
 - Problem properties, redevelopment, stray animals, graffiti abatement, communications/PR/social network administrator, senior services, transportation coordination, workforce development, childcare, urban gardening, literacy (Little Free Library), yard maintenance crew, house-sitting or monitoring services, sports or hobbies, senior visitations, parent’s day out

Normalize Your Neighborhood

- Identify your geographic, organizational and institutional partners, and partner up!
- Send *somebody* to *everything*- it is critical that you show 'process participation' by having your neighborhood represented at every opportunity. Just don't always send the *same* somebody.
- Use the process as much as possible. If something breaks down, go above that office and upward until resolved- but do not call upon the media to repair broken policy. You will only embarrass the partners at your table. Unless you are an experienced PR person, calling the media to address a problem in your neighborhood is often times counter productive.

Normalize Your Neighborhood

- Charge a membership fee, even if it's just a gesture. In most cases this won't discourage membership but will allow members to acknowledge it has actual value. And by your good deeds, you will demonstrate over time that it's the best fifteen bucks they ever spent!
- Businesses in your neighborhood or along your boundaries are also community stakeholders and should be solicited to join your association.
 - These will be your group of trustees, whom you'll go back to for fundraising later.
 - Recommendation: Slide the scale on membership fees.

Normalize Your Neighborhood

- Once you've identified asset or talent gaps, work to fill those specific gaps ('one bite at a time').
 - Nobody owns a lawn service in your neighborhood who is willing to partner for gardening projects? Invite Clean Memphis, Grow Memphis and/or City Beautiful to join your association, as nonprofit partners!
- Employees of larger companies living in your neighborhood don't have to be executives to leverage their company for your neighborhood's improvement.
 - Encourage mid and lower wage earners to *work their work networks* on your behalf. Many companies have giving campaigns and obligations-BOLO

Quickly Summarizing How to Be *Normal*

- Never underestimate the power of a small, determined group of people.
- Capacity is measured by how effectively you meet the needs of your community, not how many ‘tails in the chairs.’
- Set several small, attainable goals, then bring massive partnerships to attain them.
- Don’t be afraid to ‘share power’ with members. Maximize the outreach by asking less engaged neighbors to attend meetings on behalf of your association.

The pleasure was mine, thanks for having me!

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